

What is the PACT?

The Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT) are administered statewide in South Carolina to public school students in grades three through eight. The PACT includes tests in four subject areas: English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies.

What is the purpose of the PACT?

The PACT items measure student performance on the South Carolina curriculum standards. The standards are statements of what students should know and be able to do at each grade level.

What is an example of a curriculum standard?

This is an ELA standard for students in grades three through five:

Demonstrate the ability to draw conclusions and make inferences.

Where can I find a copy of the South Carolina curriculum standards?

All curriculum standards are published on the Web site of the State Department of Education (SDE).

How do PACT items measure the student’s performance with regard to the curriculum standards?

This is an example of a sixth-grade mathematics standard:

Create and solve problems involving the mean, median, mode, and range of a set of data.

Here is a multiple-choice item that is aligned with the above standard:

1. Use the following numbers to answer the question:

1, 5, 5, 17, 23, 35, 66, 66, 66, 73, 101

What is the mode for this set of numbers?

- A. 5
- B. 17
- C. 66
- D. 73

Here is another example of a multiple-choice item that would measure the student’s ability to solve problems involving the mean, median, mode, or range for a set of data:

2. Use the following numbers to answer the question:

1, 5, 5, 17, 25, 35, 66, 66, 66, 74

Calculate the mean score of this set of numbers.

- A. 35
- B. 36
- C. 37
- D. 38

Another way that a student’s knowledge of this standard could be measured is with a test item such as this:

3. Use the following numbers to answer the question:

1, 5, 5, 17, 23, 35, 66, 66, 66, 73, 101

What is the median score of this set of numbers?
Show your work or explain your answer in the space below.

Answer: _____

What types of items are on the PACT, and what are some examples?

The PACT includes multiple-choice and constructed-response items. Most ELA items are based on reading passages. Each ELA test also includes one extended-writing item.

An ELA *multiple-choice* item might be similar to the following:

What is the tone of the passage?

- A. formal
- B. humorous
- C. persuasive
- D. technical

A *constructed-response* item requires the student to compose an answer or to work a problem. An ELA constructed-response item might be similar to this:

David and his father expressed different views about having a pet. Compare their views. Use details from the passage to support your answer.

An *extended-writing* item requires the student to write a composition about a topic. Here is an example of an ELA extended-writing item:

Write a composition about a day that was so good you wished it would never end. Describe what happened on this memorable day.

In the “Time to Write” section of the test booklet, the student is given helpful instructions to follow in responding to the topic. For example, the student is told to be sure that his or her written response contains an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. More information about these test instructions is available on the SDE’s Office of Assessment Web page, under the PACT program link.

Where can I find more information about the number of items, the number of points, and the types of items that will be on the PACT?

More information about the number and kind of items on each test is published in the PACT blueprint documents, which are available on the Office of Assessment Web page: click the “Blueprints” link on the PACT program page.

Where can I find additional samples of PACT items?

Items used on previous PACT administrations can be found on the SDE’s Web site: go to the PACT program page and click the “PACT Release Items” link.

What types of scores do students receive?

Total scale scores and performance levels are provided for the ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies PACT tests. ELA performance levels are also reported for two of the content areas tested: reading and writing. In addition, scores are reported for each component of the student’s extended-writing response: content and development, organization, voice, and conventions. Further explanation of the ELA scores can be found on the SDE’s Web site: go to the PACT program page and click the “How PACT ELA is Scored” link.

What are performance levels?

The four PACT performance levels are categories that reflect the overall knowledge and skills exhibited by students on the tests:

- Advanced:** The student has exceeded expectations for student performance with regard to the state curriculum standards.
- Proficient:** The student has met expectations for student performance with regard to the state curriculum standards.
- Basic:** The student has met minimum expectations for student performance with regard to the state curriculum standards.
- Below Basic:** The student has not met minimum expectations for student performance with regard to the state curriculum standards.

Parent Brochure

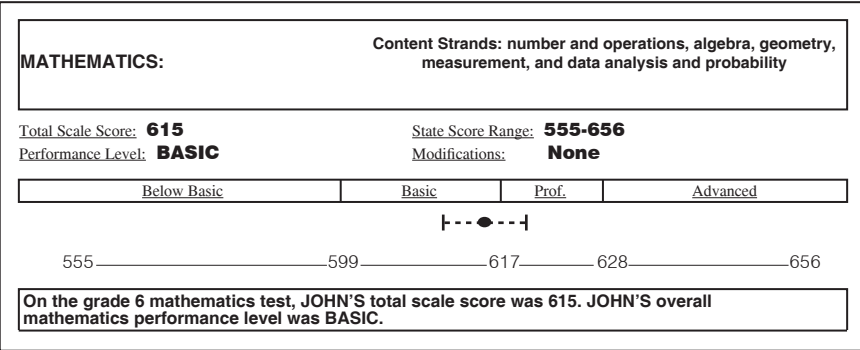
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What happens if a student scores below basic on the PACT?

Schools must develop and implement individual academic plans for students if they score below basic on the PACT. Creating academic plans involves teachers, parents, and students in finding ways to improve the teaching and learning process so that students will have a better academic foundation.

How are students and parents notified about PACT scores?

Students receive an individual student report (ISR) from their school. The ISR shows the student's total scale score and performance level for each subject. The following is an example of the math section of a sixth-grade ISR:



The student's score is plotted on a graph that shows the score in relation to the total range of students' scores on the test.

What does my child's PACT report tell me?

PACT results are useful for gauging a student's level of performance in large subject areas such as math or science. The PACT results are only one source of information about a student, however, and should be considered along with other relevant data when decisions about a student's academic progress are being made. A diagnostic test would help to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses with regard to more specific skills and knowledge.

What should I do if my child's grades in school are high but her performance on the PACT is low?

Teachers should be using the curriculum standards to guide their instruction in the classroom. If a student performs well in school but his or her PACT scores are unsatisfactory, the parent should meet with the child's teachers as well as the principal of the school to discuss the student's performance.

If my child has a disability, does he have to be tested? If so, what help is available for my child?

Students with an IEP or a 504 Plan must participate in the PACT. A student can be allowed accommodations, modifications, and/or supplemental materials and devices when he or she is taking the PACT, but such aids must be consistent with those that are routinely used for this particular student in classroom instruction and testing throughout the school year. Information on the assistance and the customized materials that can be provided for students with disabilities is available on the SDE's Web site: go to the Office of Assessment's home page and click the "Students with Disabilities" link.

My child has significant disabilities. Does she have to take the PACT?

All students must be tested. The PACT Alternate Assessment (PACT-Alt) was developed for students who cannot participate in the PACT, even with accommodations and/or modifications.

As a parent, what can I do to help my child succeed on the PACT?

- Make sure your child attends school every day.
- Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep and eats well-balanced meals, especially breakfast.
- Encourage your child to read instead of watching TV or playing electronic games.
- Provide a quiet time each night for your child to read or do homework.
- Keep in touch with your child's teachers. Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Volunteer to help out during school activities and other programs at the school.



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